DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 570 IR 014 596

AUTHOR Podany, Zita
TITLE New and Promising: Software Worth a Look. A MicroSIFT Survey of Educational Software Preview Center Coordinators. Volume II, No. 1.
INSTITUTION Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Mar 90
CONTRACT 400-86-006
NOTE 10p.; For Volume I, No. 4 (November 1989) of this series, see ED 319 363.
PUB TYPE Reference Materials - Directories/Catalogs (132)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Computer Assisted Instruction; Computer Graphics; Computer Simulation; Computer Software Reviews; *Courseware; Databases; Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Arts; *Mathematics Instruction; *Science Instruction; *Social Studies

ABSTRACT

This guide lists 21 software packages considered to be worthy of further consideration by other reviewing agencies and schools by a group of 12 computer coordinators from educational software preview centers and evaluation agencies. These software products have been selected as not being likely to appear in the reviews produced by major software evaluation agencies. Included are reviews of courseware for applications in biology, civics, geography, geology, history, language arts, mathematics, music, physics, problem solving, and writing. The types of programs include simulations, use of computer tools (e.g., Hyperscreen), word processing, tutorials, databases, and games. In addition to a brief description of the software package, each entry includes information on: (1) the publisher; (2) the suggested grade level(s); (3) topics addressed; (4) hardware requirements; and (5) price. A list of software producers' addresses and telephone numbers is also provided. (GL)

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THE Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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NEW AND PROMISING: Software Worth A Look

A MicroSIFT Survey of Educational Software Preview Center Coordinators

Volume II, No. 1

Zita Podany

March 1990

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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

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In February 1990, a group of twelve computer coordinators from large educational software preview centers and evaluation agencies were asked to identify new products they have seen which, in their professional opinion, are worthy of further consideration by other reviewing agencies and schools. The purpose of this poll is to highlight new titles which are not likely to appear in the reviews from major software evaluation agencies. The following list represents the results of this poll.

Audubon Wildlife Adventures: Whales
Publisher: Advanced Ideas **Price:** $49.95; school edition, $59.95
Grades: 4-12
Topics: Life Science, Biology, Science, Simulation
Hardware Requirements: Apple II e, c, 128K; Apple IIGS 512K; IBM PC family 256K; IBM PS2 512K, CGA required.
Brief Description: Four interactive stories introduce students to a number of conservation issues. Students learn about the habits of different types of whales and how humans continue to affect them. Includes a whale conservation booklet with many supplemental activities.

CD Companion Series: Ludwig von Beethoven, Symphony No. 9
Publisher: The Voyager Company **Price:** $99.95
Grades: 7-14
Topics: Fine Arts, Music, CD-ROM
Hardware Requirements: Macintosh Plus or higher with hard disk; CD-ROM Player
Brief Description: First volume in the CD Companion Series. Explores Beethoven's Ninth Symphony using text, audio, and graphics examples taken from the included CD. Package includes a five-part HyperCard program and a compact-disk recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Creature Cube
Publisher: Sunburst Communications **Price:** $65.00
Grades: 7-12
Topics: Game, Problem Solving, Logic
Hardware Requirements: Apple II family, 64K
Brief Description: Students try to find a creature hidden within a three-dimensional cube comprised of many blocks, each of which can be opened. As students remove layers from the cube, hints are provided as to the creature's whereabouts. Lab packs are available.

GTV: A Geographic Perspective on American History
Publisher: National Geographic Society **Price:** $650.00
Grades: 5-12
Topics: Files, Videodisc, Tutorials, Social Studies, History, Geography
Hardware Requirements: Apple IIGS, 512K, ROM version 1.0, two 3.5" disk drives; Macintosh with a hard drive and HyperCard; mouse; Pioneer 4200 videodisc or equivalent; TV monitor; printer (optional).
Brief Description: This program, consisting of video segments interspersed with computer graphics, text and maps, provides a comprehensive look at American History from a geographical perspective . GTV videodiscs can be used with or without the accompanying software. With the program's editing capabilities, students may create their own presentations. Includes two videodiscs, software diskettes, teacher's guide, a U.S. physical map, a timeline chart, cable for computer and videodisc hook-up, and library cards.

Hyperscreen

Publisher: Scholastic, Inc. **Price:** $99.95
Grades: 7-14
Topics: Tool, Presentation
Hardware Requirements: Apple II e, c, GS, 128K
Brief Description: A multimedia presentation tool allowing students and teachers to create interactive presentations, reports, and lessons using the program's built-in fonts, clip art, and drawing tools. Users can link screens together in various ways to produce special types of actions. Segments or frames from videodiscs can also be incorporated into projects. Compatible with the Apple II Video Overlay Card. Lab packs and network versions are available.

Interactive Nova: Animal Pathfinders

Publisher: Scholastic **Price:** $395.00
Grades: 5-10
Topics: Science, Life Sciences, Biology, Videodisc
Hardware Requirements: Mac Plus, SE, II, with 20MB or larger hard drive, interactive videodisc player, color video monitor, RS-232 cable.
Brief Description: An interactive multimedia program designed to help students understand animal behavior and migration patterns. With the use of HyperCard, students and teachers can manipulate the presentation of material on the videodiscs. The database linked to related video sequences, contains over 600 cards describing animals, their habits and behaviors. A Report Maker feature allows users to create their own documentaries. Students can further be challenged as they assume the role of investigative reporters to solve animal mysteries in the Activities section of the program. Package includes videodiscs, program disks, a teacher and user's guide, infomation sheet, and an icon reference chart. Produced by WGBH and Peace River Films. Based on the NOVA documentary, "The Mystery of Animal Pathfinders."

Interactive Physics

Publisher: Knowledge Revolution **Price:** $249.00
Grades: 10-16
Topics: Science, Physical Science, Physics, Simulation, Problem Solving
Hardware Requirements: Macintosh Plus with 1MB of RAM, SE, SE/30, II, IIX, IICX, IIci, Portable; two disk drives or one disk drive with a hard drive; system software 6.0.2 or later.
Brief Description: A physics simulation of the fundamental principles in Newtonian Mechanics enabling students to experiment with properties of motion. Students can design their own experiments by drawing objects on the screen. Results can be analyzed numerically, graphically, or with vectors. Lab packs are available.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Publisher: Optical Data **Price:** $395.00
Grades: 9 -16
Topics: Files, Database, Videodisc, Social Studies, History, Special Education, Bilingual
Hardware Requirements: Macintosh, HyperCard, laserdisc player, CAV format
Brief Description: A videodisc narrated by Ted Koppel presenting the issues and events which shaped the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. With HyperCard, users can navigate through the vast array of information, graphics, and sound stored on the videodisc. The Documentary Maker feature allows teachers and students to create their own custom presentation of movie clips either for manual or automatic playback. Closed captioned for the hearing impaired. Second sound track is in Spanish.

Math Football: Rounding
Publisher: Gamco Industries, Inc. **Price:** $44.95 without backup; $54.95 with backup
Grades: 3-12
Topics: Math, Arithmetic, Drill, Game
Hardware Requirements: Apple II plus, e, c, 64K; Commodore 64, 128K; IBM PC 256K; TRS-80 models III and IV, 48K; Color graphics card (CGA) required for IBM.
Brief Description: This program, part of a math series, combines football action with rounding drills. Players have a choice of four playing levels, ranging from rounding whole numbers to tens, hundreds, thousands, to rounding larger whole numbers and decimals. The student management system automatically tracks student progress. Lab packs and a network version are available.

McGee
Publisher: Lawrence Productions, Inc. **Price:** $39.95
Grades: 0-1
Topics: Readiness, Language Arts
Hardware Requirements: Apple IIGS 512K; Macintosh 512K, SE, II; Amiga 512K, IBM; Tandy; mouse
Brief Description: A preschool program, containing no words, enables the user to become familiar with the computer. By simply clicking the mouse and making a selection, children guide McGee through a series of animated, early-morning adventures around the house.

Minerals Database
Publisher: Sunburst Communications **Price:** $59.00
Grades: 6-12
Topics: Database, Science, Earth Science, Geology, Files
Hardware Requirements: Apple II family 64K, 128K; Commodore 64.
Brief Description: Students explore and identify the characteristics of minerals. Some activities are designed to encourage students to experiment and create away from the computer. Designed to work with Bank Street School Filer. Lab packs are available.

The New Printshop Companion
Publisher: Broderbund **Price:** Apple $49.95; IBM PC $59.95
Grades: 0-12
Topics: Graphics, Language Arts, Page layout
Hardware Requirements: Apple II e, c; IBM PC / Tandy
Brief Description: The Printshop Companion has been redesigned to include more design options. With the Page Publisher feature users can combine text and graphics to create flyers and newsletters. Other options include an Envelope Maker, Graphic,Font, and Border editors with full paint capabilities, and several utilities enabling the cataloging or importation of graphics. Lab packs are available.

Point of View (Macintosh Version)
Publisher: Scholastic **Price:** $199.95
Grades: 6-12
Topics: History, Social Studies, Tool
Hardware Requirements: Macintosh SE. II, with at least I MB of RAM
Brief Description: An overview of U.S. history. A computer presentation and research tool enabling the study and interpretation of historical data in relation to various factors. Students and teachers can create presentations integrating graphics, text, charts, and sounds. Can also be linked to a videodisc to incorporate video clips into projects. A teacher's guide is included. MS-DOS version will be available in 1991.

Project Classify: Mammals
Publisher: National Geographic Society **Price:** $139.95
Grades: 4 - 8
Topics: Simulation, Science, Life Science, Biology

Hardware Requirements: Apple II e, c, GS, 128K; color monitor is recommended
Brief Description: Students gain an understanding of the processes utilized by scientists in identifying and classifying animals. Enhances critical reading and observation skills as students learn to use an identification key in their quest to locate mystery animals. Kit includes two disks, student booklets, a teacher's guide, reproducible activity sheets, and a sound filmstrip.

SimCity: The City Simulator
Publisher: Maxis
Price: $49.95; Mac II/IIcx $79.95; Commodore 64 $29.95.
Grades: 8-12
Topics: Civics, Game, Social Studies, Simulation
Hardware Requirements: Macintosh 512e, SE, II, IIcx; Commodore 64, 128K; IBM PC; Tandy 1000; Amiga 512
Brief Description: A city management simulation allowing students to understand and appreciate the complexities and social problems involved in running a city--everything from managing the municipal budget to dealing with crime, pollution, and other unexpected problems. Students can design their own city or manage one of seven well-known cities around the world. Lab packs are available.

Story Starters: Social Studies
Publisher: Pelican Software
Price: $49.95
Grades: 2-6
Topics: Language Arts, Writing, Files, Social Studies, History
Hardware Requirements: Apple II family, 128K; Echo speech synthesizer is optional.
Brief Description: Part of a creative writing series designed to stimulate writing across the curriculum. Students can incorporate colorful backgrounds and graphics to enhance their stories depicting real or fictitious events in history. Lab packs are available.

Superprint II: The Next Generation
Publisher: Scholastic
Price: $69.95
Grades: 6-14
Topics: Tool, Graphics
Hardware Requirements: Apple II e, c, GS, 128K; IBM PC and compatibles with color graphics card, 256K; printer
Brief Description: Program enables teachers and students to create cards, posters, banners, borders, and calendars as large as six feet tall. Users can place text and graphics wherever they desire. Contains a large graphics library, four typestyles. Creations can be printed in black and white or color. A network version is available.

Super Story Tree
Publisher: Scholastic
Price: $79.95
Grades: 6-12
Topics: Tool, Word Processing, Graphics, Writing, Language Arts
Hardware Requirements: Apple II family, 128K; IBM 256K
Brief Description: Students can design and create branching interactive stories integrating text, sound effects, music, graphics, and student-generated art. Page linking features enable the writer to design plot twists for maximum reader interest and interaction. Other features include drawing tools, a library of graphics and digitized sounds, musics and sound effects, fonts in a variety of sizes and styles, and special effects page transitions to create scene changes and interludes.

UltraKey

Publisher: Bytes **Price:** Apple $89.00; Macintosh $99.00
Grades: 3-14
Topics: Tutorial, Keyboarding
Hardware Requirements: Apple II plus, e, c, GS, 64K; Mac 512K or better. Software is network aware, thereby it can be used on any network.
Brief Description: Keyboarding tutorial emphasizing good posture, proper fingering technique, and correct hand positions. Program identifies errors, patterns, and provides suggestions for improvement. Automatic recordkeeping keeps track of student progress. A free evaluation disk can be requested. Site licensing is available: $325 for the Apple; $360 for the Macintosh.

What Do You Do With A Broken Calculator?

Publisher: Sunburst Communications **Price:** $65.00
Grades: 2-14
Topics: Logic, Arithmetic, Problem Solving, Math
Hardware Requirements: Apple II family, 64K; IBM PC/PC jr, 128K; IBM PS2, 256K; Tandy 1000, 256K
Brief Description: With some of the calculator keys disabled, students must find the order of operations which will produce the target number. Students can review the steps used after the problem is solved. Lab Packs are available.

Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego?

Publisher: Broderbund **Price:** $54.95
Grades: 7-12
Topics: History, Social Studies, Database, Game
Hardware Requirements: IBM PC; Apple II family
Brief Description: Carmen and her gang of fifteen are at it again. This time they're using a time machine to travel to hideouts from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age. As they search for criminals, traveling to the time and scene of the crime questioning witnesses and analyzing clues, players gain knowledge about the people, events, and inventions that have shaped the world from 400 A.D. to the 1950s: Includes *The New American Encyclopedia* reference book.

PRODUCER CONTRACT INFORMATION

Advanced Ideas
2902 San Pablo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94702
415/526-9100

Broderbund
P.O. Box 12947
San Rafael, CA 94913
800/521-6263

Bytes
150 Consumers Rd., Suite 202
Willowdale, Ontario M2J 1P9
416/495-9913

Gamco Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 186256
Big Spring, TX 79721-1862
915/267-6327
800/351-1404

Knowledge Revolution
497 Vermont St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
415/553-8153

Lawrence Productions
1800 South 35th St.
Galesburg, MI 49053-9687
800/421-4157

Maxis
1042 Country Club Dr., Suite C
Moraga, CA 94556
415/376-6434

National Geographic Services
Educational Services
Dept. 90
Washington, DC 20036
202/828-6605
800/368-2728

Optical Data
30 Technology Dr.
Box 4919
Warren, NJ 07060
201/668-0022
800/524-2481

Pelican Software, Inc.
768 Farmington Ave.
Farmington, CT 06032
800/247-4641

Scholastic
2931 East McCarty St.
P.O. Box 7502
Jefferson City, MO 65102
800/541-5513

Sunburst Communications
39 Washington Ave.
Pleasantville, NY 10570-2898
800/628-8897

The Voyager Company
1351 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Santa Monica, CA 90401
800/446-2001

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Robert R. Rath, Executive Director
Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Associate Director

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- Developing and disseminating effective educational products and procedures
- Conducting research on educational needs and problems
- Providing technical assistance in educational problem solving
- Evaluating effectiveness of educational programs and projects
- Providing training in educational planning, management, evaluation and instruction
- Serving as an information resource on effective educational programs and processes including networking among educational agencies, institutions and individuals in the region

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Lealofi Uiagalelei
Director of Education
Government of American Samoa

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 275-9500
GTE: NWREL.LAB
FAX: (503) 275-9489

Center for the Advancement of Pacific Education
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 533-1748
GTE: PREL.LAB
FAX: (808) 523-1741

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